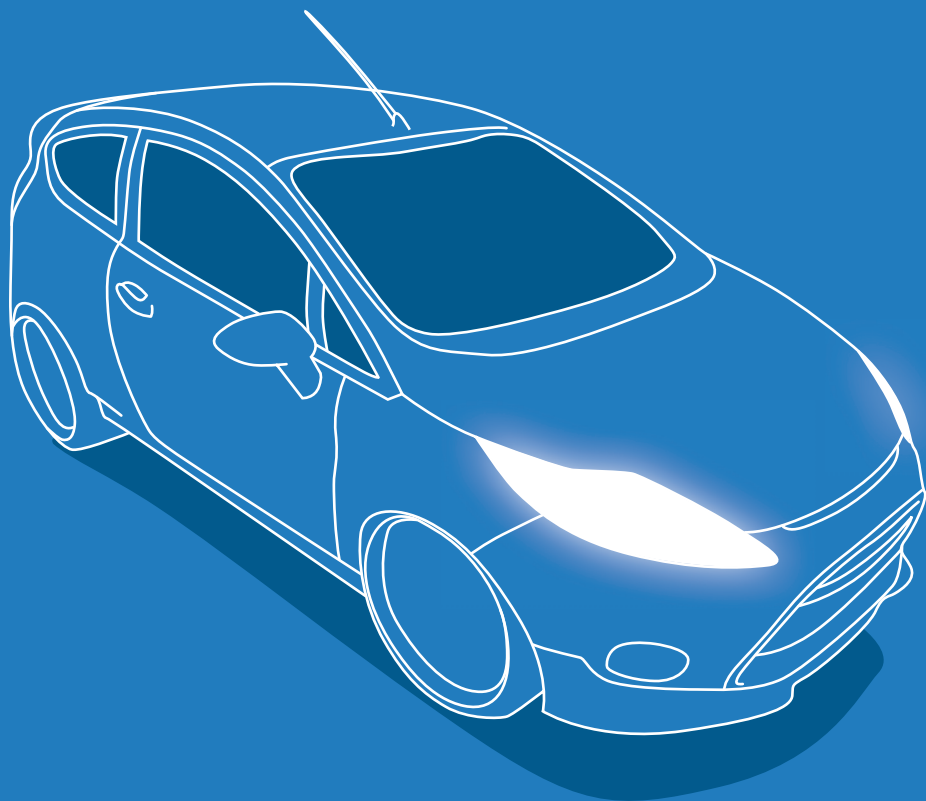


Matti Koivurova



DRL FINLAND 1970

ROADS' SAFETY

HISTORYBOOK

DRL Finland 1970

– Road safety –

History Book

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DRL Finland 1970
– Road safety –
History Book

I dedicate the book to my late wife Pirkko Marjatta
and my daughter Tiina Anne-Maria.

Dear reader

The countries' economies began to grow rapidly in the 1960s. As a result, traffic also increased sharply. In particular, the number and speeds of cars increased. Traffic volumes increased and safety began to develop in a bad direction. Moving on the roads was dangerous. More than half of those killed in traffic were pedestrians, cyclists and moped riders. Something had to be done.

And while the roads and cars weren't very advanced yet, no general speed limits were set. Some attempts were made in parliament, but they did not receive the support of a majority of representatives. They were not presented by the authorities either. Speed restrictions were turned out throughout the 1960s, and it was not until the next decade that restrictions came.

In Finland, the countries of the northern hemisphere have dark winters and bright summers. The safety of traffic in the dark began to be promoted with lights and reflectors as early as the 1960s. Finland has probably been one of the pioneers in the development and use of pedestrian reflectors. Since the winter days were also quite dark, the use of headlights in the cars during the day was also recommended.

In Finland, good and bad experiences were gained from the recommendation of daytime running lights. Those who used the lights were in a better position than before and those who drove without lights were in an even worse position. The party concerned about security suggested to the party responsible for security that the problem be resolved by imposing usage of driving lights on everyone. The decision to force the use of headlights for the following winter season was taken in July 1970 and entered into force on 1 October 1970.

Forcing cars to use headlights was, in many ways, a major act after the failure to impose speed limits. Finland was the first country able to do so. After all, the country monitors what has been done

elsewhere and does the same. Now there was no country from which we could have taken an example and experienced. Finland was now an example for others, such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Canada. Sweden first in 1977 and others following Sweden. Canada's message to Finland: It would not have been possible without Finland's pioneering work!

In Rovaniemi on December 12, 2021

Matti Koivurova



Liikenneturva's Road safety poster

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Intro

The pamphlet is defined critical, it often handles issues and the author expresses his own opinions directly.

Let's start far from the 17th century, leaning on Peter Englund's book 'The Years of the Great War'.

During those old days, when there were no faster ways to move than on foot or on horseback, traveling was slow and inefficient and sluggishness was a natural part of people's daily lives.

Even speed had to be avoided, as it was neither great nor appropriate and through slowness, people showed that they owned their own time.

The slowness of the movement might be due to natural conditions, for example, constant rain made the road impassable.

The arrival of ice and snow was downright expected as it facilitated movement, the country roads were bad and therefore slow.

Most walked, not everyone had a horse: the horse owner loaded the horse's back or pulled it with horse-drawn wooden poles; horse-drawn carriage was also a rarity.

Most roads were curvy, narrow, and poorly constructed, bridges across rivers were rare.

Accidents

Traveling was dangerous, due to the poor condition of the roads, accidents when traveling in wagons were common.

Clashes were common, especially on the narrow streets of cities and accidents occurred due to unclear evasion rules; in Germany, for example, you had to turn right when you encountered them, but not everywhere.

Another commonly known danger was highway robbers who robbed, beat, or killed passengers.

For a 17th century man, the journey must have been great and miraculous and people were proud to share their experiences.

There were good sides to moving slowly where it was easy to stop and chat with other passers-by, along the way, people could plan their future activities.

This was life and movement until the 19th century, and even after trains, bicycles, motorcycles, and cars appeared.

The engines displaced horses more widely only after World War II and people no longer walked longer distances.

Accident Prevention Begins

From the late 1920s onwards, car associations began to distribute enlightenment to their members like other countries.

Safety was promoted by setting up a Transport Culture Committee with organizations and the public administration.

Statistics on accidents began a couple of years after the establishment of the Culture Committee.

The maximum speed for passenger cars was raised to 70 km/h and in urban areas to 45 km/h. In 1931 there were 41,527 motor vehicles, 113 people died in accidents.

The Traffic Culture Committee joined the Traffic Division of the Accident Prevention Association, which had been established in 1939.

There was a violation in the 1948 car ordinance: the speed of cars

and motorcycles was not limited; apparently there was trust that "the driver controls his vehicle in all situations".

In addition: "high speed may only be used when the road is wide enough, the view is clear and traffic is usually easy to assess". The judgment of all drivers cannot always be relied upon.

In the 1950s, the state became more active in promoting security works, a 2% road safety charge was introduced and the share was ordered to be taken from car insurance premiums. Work with a significant impact on security would have been a direct activity of the state.

The regulation on the Road Safety Authority and its tasks was then laid down and Talja was entrusted with the task.

Parliamentary Survey on Traffic Safety 1952

Representative Jaakko Hakala and others marveled at the lack of speed limits and training for motorcyclists; the minister replied that "road safety and the factors affecting it are a very difficult problem".

Representatives also asked whether the government had paid attention to the increase in traffic accidents and what measures had taken or intended to take to improve road safety.

Just a couple of years earlier, the committee suggested that work on road safety should be organized centrally. Committee: "The problem is psychological, it is a question of the driver's sense of responsibility".

The Committee believes that there should be educational training and teaching in schools. "There is nothing wrong with our current law under which insecurity could be due to it".

"Provisions of law, fines and imprisonment for violating them are only of secondary importance". How well was this information true?

The law must first be learned and embraced before distributing penalties for breaking it. There was no desire to legislate, even for experimental purposes.

Desire Initiative on Road Safety

1961 Antti J. Rantamaa and e.g. Johannes Virolainen, Juha Rihtniemi, Veikko Helle and Veikko Vennamo, altogether 80 MPs in Parliament.

The initiative stated that "the government will take urgent measures to improve road safety." The initiative was justified by 18,690 accidents in which 649 people and 111 children died.

It was suggested that "general speed limits should be considered initially as an experiment. Limits should be low rather than high, such as 80-90 km/h, which may seem unreasonably severe, but something needs to be done".

Why just a desire initiative? Why only 80 representatives? Did the majority of representatives consider the development to be natural? Nothing could be done, as the number of cars increases, so does the number of accidents.

Governors Woke Up

In 1962, a meeting of county governors made a proposal to set up a committee to study the effects of speed limits. Already a couple of months later, the committee proposed a 90 km/h roof speed test in the three southern counties for the summer months.

The results of the roof speed test showed that accidents in restricted counties decreased by 5.4% and deaths by 10%, while accidents in other counties increased by 35.1% and deaths by 37%.

In the Gallup Interview Survey in Finland, 79% considered a roof speed test necessary and 78% of Talja's respondents supported a roof speed test.

In 1963, in accordance with the proposal of the above-mentioned committee, the Ministry of Transport decided to carry out a 90 km/h roof speed test on public holidays throughout the country. 913 road deaths were recorded, an increase of 12.7% compared to the previous year.

History of road transport, history of security. Road traffic affects us all. Security should therefore be of interest to everyone. Basically, everyone wants to live. Traffic has been and still considered dangerous, even though the roads are much safer than before.

Security thinking is reasonably young. In the 1960s, it was difficult to get speed limits. Road deaths increased as the number of cars increased. Development was considered inevitable.

Seat belts were imposed on the front seats of passenger cars, but use remained voluntary. Safety thinking began to evolve, in less than five years in the late 1970s the use of seat belts became mandatory in almost all countries.

The first regulations on the daytime use of headlights were issued in Finland and it happened in 1970. Now, five decades later, the daytime running lights come on automatically when you start driving.

The use of helmets by motorcyclists and moped riders was very low in the 1950s, and not very common in the 1960s. The use of a helmet became mandatory in the 1970s for motorcyclists and in the 1980s for moped riders. The use of a cycling helmet began to become more common in the 1990s.

Pedestrians and cyclists used to travel on the same lanes as motor vehicles, in the dark, reflectors were used to reduce the risk. Thousands of kilometers of cycle paths have been made in a few decades, when there were hardly any at all in the 1960s.

Pamphlet. The author also criticizes in the book, so it can be considered a pamphlet in that regard.

MATTI KOIVUROVA (b. 1941) is a car engineer at the Helsinki Polytechnic. In his work as a safety engineer, he became particularly familiar with the safety devices of vehicles and pedestrians.

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